

BLUE BERET

Farewell to FC Major General Lund



On 28 July 2016, Major General Kristin Lund of Norway completed her tenure as UNFICYP Force Commander. Major General Lund is the first – and so far the only – woman appointed as Force Commander of a UN peacekeeping mission, and the first Force Commander from Norway. As she frequently notes, her Viking nature relishes challenges, and these two years provided plenty of these; shortly after her arrival in July 2014, she quickly established herself within the mission and has displayed formidable energy and enthusiasm throughout her service.

As a Force commander she was fully responsible for the troop's preparedness for any possible scenarios, so from the very beginning and throughout her tenure she was keen to inspect newly-arrived contingents and personally meet and work with the Commanders and their troops. She emphasized the importance of the role of the military component within the mission and was determined that all troops fully understood the mission's mandate and her executive orders. She was always very well-informed about the situation in the buffer zone and provided valuable advice to Commanders how to deal with the problems taking into consideration not only the military point of view, but also political and community perspectives.

When heavy rains once again caused mine hazards in parts of Mammari in the buffer zone in the Spring of 2015, she actively participated to solve the issue with urgency. Through intermission

cooperation with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a Cambodian team was sent to Cyprus and within a few months of tireless, elaborate work, the area was cleared of mine hazards. Major general Lund's excellent relationship with the UNIFIL Force Commander and other mine action colleagues ensured the success of the mission's demining work, an important confidence-building measure in support of the Cyprus peace process.

When the negotiation process restarted and intensified in 2015, she, based on her experience, recognized a need to act not only inward as a Force Commander, but also to reach out beyond the mission, actively participating in a number of events with local NGOs from both communities and the Bicomunal Technical Committee on Gender Equality. Her vast experience as a trailblazing woman in the military made her contributions to the island-wide conversation on boosting the role of women in peace and security particularly valuable. General Lund also build strong relationships and worked with the leaders' wives, Mrs. Andrii Anastasiades and Mrs. Meral Akinci. She used every opportunity to publicize the mission's importance and role in Cyprus, whether through media interviews or public speeches during events or in meetings with students, sharing with them the UN values and her own experiences.

Major General Lund was always cautious about the security and safety of her troops, launching several initiatives to improve it, including renovation of dangerous and derelict buildings in the Green Line. A stickler for detail, she became well-known in the mission for her ability to view things from various points of view and analyze their implications on a strategic level.

Major General Lund's tenure was also marked by the progress of many gender-oriented initiatives, including the establishment of a female military networking group and increasing dialogue with prominent women and female organisations in Cyprus. Further, being the first female Force Commander attracted considerable media attention and interest, giving her the opportunity to advocate UNFICYP's mission.

One thing is for sure, Major General Lund leaves a different mission than the one she found; she improved the perception of UN peacekeepers by the civilian population through her excellent leadership and teamwork. Always ready with a warm smile, she has always been eager to give credit where it is due, sharing achievements with members of the mission and always encouraging troops to do better. A keen participant in events in the Sectors, military skill competitions, she sought to inspire her troops to achieve greater heights in their endeavors. Few can forget the sumptuous and entertaining dinners she hosted at her residence, with delicacies such as dried rib of lamb, cured leg of lamb, steamed pork belly, smoked salmon or fermented trout served in traditional Norway style.

On her final day with UNFICYP, Major General Lund participated in a brief handover-takeover ceremony at HQ, followed by a TACTICA ride out of the Blue Beret Camp, saluted by members of the military, police and civilian components – a fitting farewell for a leader who will be greatly missed.

We thank Major General Lund for her outstanding service to the UN and to Cyprus, and wish her the very best as she embarks on new adventures.





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